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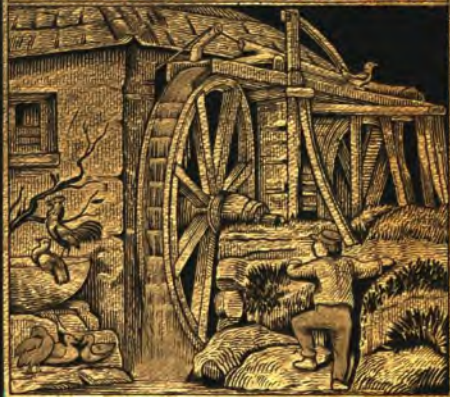
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**ROBERT DAWSON**



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THEN I WENT AWAY TO LOOK ABOUT THE PLEASANT PRECINCTS  
OF THE MILL,—See page 33.

*Robert Dawson;*

OR,

THE BRAVE SPIRIT.



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Robert Dawson;

OR,

## THE BRAVE SPIRIT.

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My Parents.



THE most interesting event of our family history, during my tenth year, was the purchase of a cow. My father had a patch of land two miles off, large enough to pasture a cow, and he well thought her milk might greatly add to the comforts of our frugal table. What a world of good things come in the wake of a good cow! Cream for our coffee, milk for our berries, butter for our bread, to say nothing of occasional cheeses made by my mother in an antiquated cheese-press. Next to Cuff, the cow might have been called the pet, at least in the esteem of Jane, Mary, and myself.

‘And who is going to drive the cow to pasture, father?’ I asked on the first evening after her arrival

'You my son ;' and his answer imparted to me a new sense of responsibility, and for some time this duty was discharged with great alacrity. The weather was fine, 'our cow' was still a novelty, and above all, my friend, Charley Frazier, had his cow to drive a mile in the same direction ; but Charley only drove his cow in pleasant weather, while I had to drive mine in all weathers, rain or shine. Now Charley was a stout boy, two years older than myself, and I did not see why he should not drive his cow when I could mine ; or rather, I began not to see any reason why I should drive mine when Charley could not his.

'Mother says I shall not go in the rain. My father hires a boy for rainy weather. I am not going in rainy weather. Not I. I do not like to.' So said Charley, as he lounged idly over the railing.

'Well, I have to go,' said I, pitying myself.

'I would not. It is too bad to be obliged to go, carrying a great heavy umbrella all the way. Mother says it is enough to walk so far, without having to go in the rain.' So Charley talked ; and so much did it begin to appear like a hard case, that I wondered why I had not thought of it sooner, and grumbled more. The more I thought of it, the more it troubled me.

'I wonder if father thinks I am tougher than anybody else ? Charley Frazier is older than I am ;' and I had a new fit of brooding over the matter.

*A cold rain* came pattering upon the windows one

morning in October. 'It rains, and I will not go to pasture for anybody,—not I ;' and down I sank upon the bed, thrusting my head under the warm clothes.

'Robert !' presently called my father, at the foot of the stairs. It was his usual summons before going.

'I am not awake yet, Sir,' said I to myself, getting farther down, and resolving to sleep again. Who does not know that sleep, vigorously wooed, is never won ? I was wide awake. After a time, I heard my father's steps returning from the barn.

'Father has done his part, ought I not to do mine ?' was a suggestion that tried to find its way fairly into my heart, but I answered it with, 'No ; 't is too bad to go two miles in the rain such a morning as this !'

'Robert, my son, get up ; the cow is ready to go to pasture.' No answer. 'Robert !' a little louder. 'Robert !' louder yet. No response.

Presently his step was on the stair. It was a slow and feeble step, for he was an invalid. I began to breathe heavily ; he entered the chamber, and took me by the arm. 'Come, my son, jump up ; you have overslept yourself ; this is unbusiness-like ; there is work to do ; jump up !' All this he said with a cheerful, inspiring tone.

'O ! it rains, father !' I began to say, but he was gone. There was no help for dressing and coming downstairs ; but there came an ugly pout upon my lips.

'Come,' said my mother, when I at last appeared ;

'come, Robert, put on your coat and thick shoes, and take the old umbrella, and see how fast you can trot.'

'Nobody can trot fast in all this rain,' said I, pettishly; and muttering lower, 'I guess Charley's mother would not let him go out such a morning; *he* could stay at home, when he wanted to. This ugly old umbrella, and these heavy old shoes!' And so nothing suited me; I lagged and fretted, when, lo! my father entered the kitchen door. I supposed he was gone.

'Are you ill this morning, Robert?'

'No, father; I am not ill, but it rains. Charley Frazier does not go to pasture except in pleasant weather, and none of the other boys go my way.' My tone was deprecating. Somehow or other I expected he would pity me and begin to say, 'Well, wait a while,' or, 'You need not go to-day, poor boy!' Similar remarks to these I had often heard addressed to Charley Frazier by his parents. 'I wish I was as well off,' I said to myself a hundred times, when I saw Charley at liberty, while I was hard at work. But it took long years to develop results.

What I expected—I might better have said, what I wished—my father to say he did *not* say. No unwise or indiscreet condolence came from his lips.

'My son, you must meet the shower just as you must meet all obstacles. It will be *only a few drops at a time*. Can you not do that, Robert? Make up your *mind, now, and act like a man*.' His tone was both

courageous and encouraging, and his fine eye was fixed earnestly upon me. '*Only a few drops at a time!*' I inwardly repeated it once, and the great, huge, leviathan shower seemed actually to dwindle down in an instant to *only a few drops at a time*.

'Yes, father,' I answered briskly, in spite of myself. The shoes were no longer heavy, nor the umbrella ugly. Off I walked bravely. '*Only a few drops at a time,*' I said aloud to the pelting rain half a dozen times, and my walk seemed comparatively a short one. Passing by Charley's house on my way home, he cried out, 'I have but just got up, and you have been away up to pasture, in the rain. O, I would not do that!'

'*Only a few drops at a time,* Charley. Make up your mind to it, and you will find it is nothing,' said I—marching by with the agreeable consciousness of something gained, which I would not have exchanged with any boy. I now know that it was the experience of the great art of grappling with difficulties, rather than avoiding them. It is not to grumble about them and magnify them—no; but to meet them with a brave heart. Then every moment would be laden only with its own burden. I have since learned from the volume of Divine truth, that this is also a great principle of religion: That we know not what shall be on the morrow, but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.



## The Arithmetic Lesson.



HO does not know the natural reluctance of childhood to make steady effort? Indeed, is it not the reluctance of the human heart at all ages? Children in deed and children in character are often ready enough to act from impulse or circumstances, and make great achievements; but it is the habit of steady, self-relying, yet humble effort which accomplishes all that is truly good and useful. We are to do *with our might* whatsoever our hands find to do. This habit cannot be begun too early, and it can only be successfully cultivated in a child, by making him feel that there is power enough in parental authority to *compel* obedience. He must understand that from '*you must*' there is no appeal.

I was at the head of my arithmetic class. What boy that has attained this honour under the old system of teaching forgets how great the honour, how exquisite the satisfaction! What a length and breadth of proportion one feels! I well remember how I seemed to

fill up the whole schoolroom with my little self. By something that some boys would call a lucky hit Charley was next to me. Every month ten or twelve 'test questions,' as they were called, were given to the class, comprising and combining the principles and rules which we had just been studying. The committee of examination, on such occasions, usually visited the school, and each scholar felt desirous of making a creditable appearance. On this occasion I raced home with my slate and pencil; and, with great alacrity, finished splitting and bringing in my wood before supper, that I might devote the whole evening to the lesson. How carefully did I wash and dry the old slate, and cut and point my pencil! I well remember how we all sat by the small deal table of those long-gone days: my mother with her darning; my sisters braiding palm-leaf hats, wherewith to add their mite to our family means; while I was working at my arithmetic, with all the diligence I was master of. With the first, second, and third sums there was no difficulty; nor with the fourth, fifth, and sixth. They were done, and I could explain them. At the seventh I made a full stop; the eighth and ninth looked as hard. The tenth I could see how to do. 'O, I cannot stop all this evening on the seventh!' said I, impatiently. 'Father must tell me.' And I began to play with my sister's palm-leaves.

'But do you not remember,' said Jane, 'that father never tells you how to do test examples? He always



says he is ready enough to explain all about the rules as you go along, but you must learn how to *use* them. Do you not remember he said so, Robert ?

‘ O, it is so hard, I cannot find it out; I know I cannot ! Besides, Jane, you know I am the head of my class. Father will help me out of this, I know,’ said I, with a nod and a wink.

‘ Why, Robert, he never does help you in test sums. He says you can and you must do them yourself.’

‘ And you know father never alters his mind,’ added Mary.

‘ But I am up at the head now, Mary; father would rather help me, than let me go down, I guess; right in the face and eyes of the committee, too; would he not mother ?’

‘ Would he not be likely to think, if you cannot maintain your place by yourself, that you are not worthy of it ?’ asked my mother, looking up from her work. This reasoning was so exactly like father’s, that I turned towards the slate, read the sum to myself and then read it aloud, and put the figures on the slate; but all the while I was inwardly declaring I *could not* do it. Of what use is effort, unless one believes that effort can accomplish something ?

The sum remained as intricate as ever. In fact I would not make the exertion even of *trying* fairly and bravely. It began to grow late, and father did not *come* home. Jane and Mary kissed mother, and went

away to bed; I nestled close beside her. Mother, I wish, when you were a girl, you had studied this arithmetic, so that you could tell me,' I said, looking up into her face, and wondering that she who knew so much should not know how to work out my sums.

'I am very sorry my dear boy prefers being told to studying it out himself,' she answered, soberly.

'Mother, I *cannot*!' declared I, knocking my heavy cow-hide shoes against the legs of her chair.

'Cannot is a lazy drone,' said she.

'And what is *can*, mother?' I merrily said.

'A smart, brisk, persevering creature, that stands on his own legs, and does not need to use other people's.'

Alas! how many bright prospects and fair hopes has that same *lazy drone* overcast and blasted! How many have met some flattering temptation, and when reason and conscience have cried out, 'Resist! flee!' they have drawled out a languid '*I cannot*!' and given themselves up to the influence of the wicked one! How many have been urged and almost persuaded to choose the strait and narrow path that leads to life eternal who at the first sight of a cross to be borne, or a darling sin to be forsaken, or a bad habit to be broken, have shrunk back with that irresolute and cowardly '*I cannot*!'

'I like *can* best; I will try to be like *can*;' and my slate and pencil began to be in motion again.

Hark! The front door opened, and my father's step was heard in the entry. 'What, my son, up still!' he

exclaimed on entering; 'I hope the lesson is well learned. I suppose it must be by this time.'

'I am waiting for you to help me, father;' and I would have given much not to have been obliged to say it. He put on his slippers and sat down by the fire.

'Well, Robert,' said he kindly, 'what are your difficulties? Let us hear them!' Then he looked at the sum and heard all I had to say: 'that I wanted him to help me, because I was at the head, and he would not wish to have me go down; and how hard the lesson was; and that I had tried and tried, and could not do it.' Again he looked at the sum, then at my slate, and then at me. With what anxiety did I watch his face: 'So hard!' I muttered every now and then in anything but a manly tone. Then he gave the slate back to me, and said, slowly: 'No, my son; I cannot help you. This is a work you can do if you fairly try. Besides, you must support your present position in the class by *your own exertions*, or you are not worthy of it.'

'O, father!' I exclaimed bitterly.

'It is late, now, my dear,' he said, patting my head. 'Go to bed now, and rise early. *Make up your mind to do that sum, and then do it.* I want to see you sustain yourself *honourably.*'

As I trudged off with my little lamp, I felt angry and disappointed, yet I could not say, 'Father never helps me;' for I could remember evening after evening, *which he had* devoted to my studies. Sleep soon came,

and I forgot the seventh sum and every other vexation until the cock crowed the next morning. Do you suppose I awoke refreshed and grateful, and longing to begin study? O, no! although I enjoyed a sleep so sweet, and awoke in the bright, early dawn, as soon as I thought of my arithmetic I began to kick the clothes and toss about in bed, and to declare I did not feel like looking at my slate at all. 'The sum was so hard, I was sure I could not do it;' and 'It was just like father not to help me.'

Ungrateful boy! I forgot my prayers and all good thoughts while I lay there, dreading and shrinking from duty. The consequence was, that the sun was high up in the east before the cow was in the pasture, and I was on my way home again. 'A pretty plight I am in!' I said to myself again and again; 'but I know what I'll do. I mean to make it just as late as I can before I get home from pasture, and then there will not be a minute to study before school begins, and then—and then'—and I chuckled at the thought—'father will have to give me an excuse, and so I shall get off.'

To carry out my resolution, I began to climb fences, and gather flowers, and knock apples off the trees with stones. I fully succeeded in whiling away the time, and did not get home until within half an hour of school time.

But ah! I did not like showing myself to my parents, nor did I feel as keen an appetite for break-

fast as usual. I feared they would penetrate my designs, and I was a coward. My bowl of nice bread and milk, set aside for me, was hastily swallowed. Then I followed my father into the wood-house. 'Father' (I began with some exertion), 'father, will you please give me an excuse? I have just got home from pasture, and have had no time to get my sums done.' He stopped his work and looked at me. My eyes fell, and were fixed on a chip at my foot.

'Do you honestly think you deserve one, Robert?' he asked seriously.

'I have not got my lesson, and cannot get it;' my eyes being still fixed on the chip.

'And that is your conclusion, after a fair, resolute trial; is it, my son!'

'Yes, father,' I would have said, but the effort died in my throat. He still rested from his work, his eyes fixed on mine, and mine fixed on the chip.

'No, father,' I faintly articulated; for I well knew there was no such thing as deceiving him in such a matter.

'I am very glad to see you dealing honestly with yourself, Robert. We can understand each other in no other way. People sometimes make miserable shifts to get along easy, but it is in vain. I cannot honestly give you an excuse, because I think your lesson can be learned, and I do not think you have *taken that time to study this morning which you*

ought to have taken, and which you might easily have done, had you really *tried*. Make up your mind to do anything, and you can do it.'

Knowing it was in vain to argue the case, I escaped from the wood-house.

'I hate the school, and my arithmetic, and everything!' cried I, aloud, when fairly beyond the hearing of my father. And what poor, lazy, inefficient youth does not indulge in the same foolish feelings! It is not he who has conquered difficulties, but he who has been conquered by them, that is unhappy, discontented, and unreasonable.

I went into the kitchen for my books, where my pitiful and complaining look and tone wrought upon the sympathies of my sister Mary. 'O mother! poor Robert will get down, he will, I know; and the school committee will be there, too. O mother! do ask father to write an excuse. Do, mother.' I was touched by this kindness; my little blue spotted handkerchief was at my face.

'Mother, do!' added Jane.

'You are in trouble, Robert, I know,' said my mother, feelingly; 'but try and meet it like a man.' Then I wiped my face, and sorrowfully left them.

On my way to school I met one and another of the boys, and sympathy enough did I find. Joe Hill's mother had given him an excuse, and in consequence, he had been on the play-ground full an hour and a

half. Sam Jones had an excuse. Bill Farley declared, flatly, he knew he could not do the lesson, and would not even try. Charley Frazier, where is he? Soon we espied Charley bounding over the green, approaching the school-house upon the run.

'Your arithmetic lesson, Charley,—how is it? You look as if you had done it, but I do not believe you have,' cried Farley.

'Yes: I've done it. Why, it's easy enough, I'm sure,' declared Charley, with a most satisfied air.

'Easy enough!' scornfully repeated Bill Farley; 'I don't know where the easy is, for my part.'

'I knew the committee were coming in, and I did not mean to let the master mortify me before them, so I got an excuse; now I am ready for play!' cried Sam Jones, flourishing his bat.

'I'll join you. Come, who's for a game of bat and ball?' shouted Charley.

'Charley Frazier thinks the lesson easy enough, and I could not do it!' The idea fastened itself on me. In truth I had entertained no very high opinion of Charley's abilities, but now they rose much in my estimation.

'Now, Charley, do tell me how you did the seventh,' said I, taking him by the arm just as he was going to join the game of ball. He pulled his arm away violently.

'O! you know what I did for you yesterday,

Charley. Come, now,' I besought him; 'come, and I will lend you my new knife just when you want it,—my best knife.' He unwillingly suffered himself to be dragged into the schoolroom, and even to our seats, where we sat down together. He took up his slate, found out, and began to explain the sixth.

'The seventh—the seventh, Charley. I know well enough about the sixth,' I cried, impatiently.

'Well, the seventh,' added Charley good-naturedly; 'there, Robert, you may copy it yourself; here it is.'

'But just tell me all the hows and whys,' I said, enviously reading over his figures.

'I do not believe I can explain it, Robert,' said Charley, looking much puzzled.

'But it's just nothing at all, unless we can explain it.'

'That is just what I cannot do,' whispered Charley: 'for my father did all the hard ones for me, and I copied them off; and then, when he tried to explain them to me, I was so sleepy I did not know one word he said. Was he not kind to do them? For mother said it was too bad I should get down in my class, just because I could not do them. Now, do not you tell, will you, Robert?'

'Why, we do not go down for anything else, except for not doing them,' said I, bluntly. My respect for Charley's abilities declined as rapidly as it had risen.



While I was picking up my pencil, which had dropped at my feet, Charley vanished from my side, and I heard his halloo on the green. 'Pooh!' I inwardly exclaimed; 'people do make miserable shifts to get along easy, as father says. I will try, and then, if I do it, I shall know how to explain it. I will make up my mind to meet this hard old seventh *like a man*, and I will master him.'

And now I began to work *in earnest*. I read over the example, and meant to understand it. I began to cipher, and meant to work it out. 'Father says I can, and I must; now let me see,' I said, with an honest desire to do all that I could. O, what priceless value there is in an honest desire to do what we can! It would save multitudes from present uselessness and from eternal suffering.

'Bob! Bob! come out here; come! we have a plan on foot!' cried Sam Jones, opening the schoolroom door, and beckoning me thither. I looked up and shook my head.

'Come!' shouted Charlie, peeping over his shoulder. 'We cannot do without you. Come, Robert! never mind about your seventh.'

'No. Business before pleasure,' I answered, keeping my pencil moving and my eye fixed upon the column of figures.

'Business!' they shouted merrily; 'business! I *guess he is Mr. Robert Dawson*, with his great big

ledger.' And they took off their hats to bow, with a mock gravity. Then away they ran to the playground.

By-and-by the school-bell rang. The master appeared, and the boys began to crowd in at the door. Soon all became quiet. Books were laid aside. A chapter was read in the Bible, and the master offered up the morning prayer. I was attentive to this service, and yet I was surprised to find how slight an interruption all this proved to be; and I now see that it was just because my mind was fixed, and easily returned to its task. The resolute do not suffer from the slight interruptions which disturb others. Thirty-five minutes after school began beheld me labouring upon the memorable seventh, and *it was done!* yes, done! and I could explain every step of the process. How grateful to my mind was the pleasure of achievement! As I stood in the class that day I knew I had *earned* my position. I had bought it with the price of effort, and I valued it accordingly. Ah! my father understood how fine a thing it is to make us rely properly upon ourselves.

Poor Charley had hard work to maintain his ground. He blushed and stammered, and made some droll blunders, until at length he was obliged to confess that he knew nothing about his sum, and thus lost his standing in the class.

'I thought young Hill and Jones belonged to this

class,' said Squire Hall, one of the committee, at the same time looking around to see where they were.

'Their parents wished them to be excused from the recitation,' answered the master.

'They are not where they ought to be, then. We want to see every boy at his post in his class,' said the squire, who kept his eye upon the standing and character of every boy in the school. The squire's good opinion was worth having, for it was generally formed upon true grounds, and his estimate of character was almost invariably correct. Jones and Hill hung their heads when his eye searched them out.


'Some of the boys have done themselves great credit,' remarked the squire, when the class was dismissed. 'They seem to understand what they are about; it is not parrot-talk.' He certainly looked very much gratified, and so did those of us who had earned the commendation.

'I will not study arithmetic—I declare I will not!' exclaimed Charley, in a pet, as we went out of school together.

'Charley, if you would only do your examples yourself, you would like it. There is nothing like helping one's self, depend upon it,' said I, feeling strong, manly, and self relying, from the morning's victory over myself. How different was our training!



## The New Suit of Clothes.

LTHOUGH our family always contrived to make a decent and even respectable appearance, we were poor. In his best days, my father had been a sea-captain, in which business he gained enough to buy a small farm in the country, the object of his fondest desires. Not long after his removal to our new abode, his health began to fail, and he was unable to engage, to any great extent, in outdoor occupations. A small sum, invested in some city stocks, was lost; and his three eldest boys died in childhood. So that the earliest remembrance of my parents is associated in my mind with traces of sorrow. I was the child of their mourning days, and yet to me what happy days they were! I soon felt the necessity of doing what little I could to add to the family stock. School-boy as I was, sometimes by cutting wood, or going to mill, or planting, or harvesting for our neighbours, I picked up a little money now and then, or perhaps I earned a bushel of corn, or half a bushel of wheat.

One morning, as I lay in bed, with my best jacket and trousers hanging up on a peg upon the wall before me, it struck me how very shabby and thread-bare they looked. I well knew the sleeves of my jacket had long since refused to approach my wrists, and that the bottoms of my trousers had dropped all acquaintance with my ankles. And now that winter was drawing near, I needed a new, warm suit. 'Mother would get me one if she could, and so would father; but I am sure they could not, for father wants a new outside coat as much as I do, and he does not get it. It must be because he has no money to buy one. I wish I was rich; but then it is of no use to wish. I wish fairy days would come back again, and a good fairy would come and touch, with her wand, my old clothes, so that in an instant they would be new—all new and handsome. Then I would give her Jane's bonnet to touch, and all mother's old shoes, and her old red shawl. Then it might be as handsome as father says it was when he brought it home from sea. Yes; and I would give her the old bellows, too; then I would not have such a fuss lighting the fire, mornings. I would give her a good assortment of things, if she would come. "Who come?" "A fairy." Pooh! there are no such things as fairies; and father says, "What is the use in brooding over what cannot be?" Yes; what is the use? Well, I cannot have *a fairy, good or bad*, I am sure; but why cannot I

have a new suit? That is not *impossible*. Then, if I ask mother, she will say, "Yes, Robert; I know you want a new suit;" and then she will look sorry because she cannot get them. Now I wonder if I could not *earn* me a whole suit? Me, earn! Yes; I could—I know I could. Now I will make up *my mind* to it, as father says, and then I will do it,—I will earn me a new suit. Earn the money, and then take it to mother, and ask her to buy the cloth. Won't her eyes twinkle?'

O, well do I remember how delightfully the thought struck me! In very joy I seized my small pillow, threw it up in the air, and caught it. Then jumping out of bed, I hopped round the room, playing curious antics all by myself while engaged in the more serious occupation of dressing. *How* to earn the desired sum began to engage my attention. 'Yes, *how*? That is *the* question.' I mused on '*how*.' 'I cannot braid palm-leaf—that is Mary's and Jane's work. Mr. Jones's harvesting is about over. I do not know of anybody that wants wood cut. If I could go into the woods and dig up and sell sassafras roots, now that would be something: but they do not buy them here. Jem Crout says they sell them to druggists, and I am sure we have no such people here.' I took down my clothes from the peg and held them up before me. 'They are shorter than ever. They grow shorter every week, it seems to me.' A very natural result

by the way. 'I'll have a new pair; I'll *earn* them, too. "Where there is a will there is a way." That is often said, and I believe it.' Such were the beginnings of the new purpose which I resolved to accomplish.

On the way to school that morning, Sam Jones joined me. 'I say, Bob, did you know Charles French is very ill of fever? He is, and he had the doctor last night.'

'I am sorry for it. Poor Charles had a headache the very last time I saw him, when I bought some tea there for mother. But who has Mr. French got to attend the shop?' I added, quickly.

Sam did not know; and what was Sam's surprise to behold me posting off in an opposite direction from school, without saying one word more. For nearly a mile did I continue my trot, until quite out of breath. There was but one shop in that part of the village where we resided, and it was kept by Mr. French, at the corner.

And a various stock it was, truly; for who could enumerate the contents of his shelves? Brooms, brushes, crockery, tea, coffee, pipes, candy, scythes, rakes,—indeed every article that the neighbourhood for ten miles round could want. My speed declined as I approached the step, and I began to consider what I was about to do. Two waggons were at the door, and as I looked into the shop, my eye caught several

people at the counters. 'Who is waiting upon them, I wonder?'

I stole in and sat down upon a tub near the door. No one but Mr. French himself was behind the counter, and he looked very sad. He had his hands full of work, supplying one and then another. 'I wonder if Mr. French has got anybody yet?' I said to myself. 'I wonder if he will have me? Will he think I know enough to help him?' As the customers became supplied they went out, even to the last. My heart beat quickly.

'Well, my boy, what do you want?' asked Mr. French. I arose from the tub, and taking off my hat, approached where he stood. I trembled and feared to speak.

'Why this is Robert Dawson!' said he. 'Ah, I did not know you with your cap over your face so. How is your father?'

'I heard Charles was ill, Sir,' at last I summoned resolution to say, 'and so I thought you might be wanting help in the shop. I came to see if you would not take me in till he gets well again.' I dared not lift my eyes from the weights on the counter, and a suffocating sensation arose in my throat.

'If you had offered yourself half an hour before, I do not know but I should have taken you, for you seem to be a smart little fellow. But I have sent for my nephew, Charles Emery, at Orange, to come and stay



with me till Charles gets better. You go to school, do you not, Robert ?

‘Yes, Sir ; but I thought if I could hire myself out for a little while, it would not be so much matter ; I can write and cipher evenings with father.’ And as I ventured to look up into Mr. French’s thin, kind face, as he stood leaning against the shelves, with his thumb caught in the armhole of his waistcoat, how sorry did I feel that I had not come half-an-hour sooner. ‘I came just as I heard of it,’ thought I ; and, indeed, there was nothing to regret.

‘Is Charles very ill, Sir ?’ I asked.

‘Well, I am afraid so ; I am afraid so,’ answered Mr. French, sorrowfully. ‘There comes the doctor’s gig, now ;’ and at that moment the horse stopped at one of the posts before the door.

‘I should like to have employed you, Robert, though I suppose it would have been new business to you ; but——’ By this time he met the doctor, and they went round together to the door which opened into his house, adjoining the shop.

‘Well,’ I sighed, as I walked away, ‘tending shop is not the only business. Poor Charles ! I am sorry he is ill. I remember now that he said, when he weighed out the tea, that he had such a headache he could hardly see how to do it.’

I did not reach the school-house till a quarter of an *hour after school* had begun. The master took no

notice of my lateness, however. Sam Jones asked me if I was taken with a running fit when I left him in such a hurry. And this was the end of my first attempt to get a new suit.

Two or three days afterwards, as I was digging potatoes in our garden, I heard a neighbour, Mr. Giles, say to his wife, 'I cannot go to mill to-day or to-morrow or next day that is certain.'

'Well, but we must have some meal, Mr. Giles,' said Mrs. Giles.

'I suppose so, and I must try and get somebody to go, I think; but everybody is so busy just now.'

'I'll go,' thought I, throwing down my spade. 'I am just the one to go!' And pushing through a little opening at the bottom of the garden, I soon found myself with Mr. Giles in his door-yard.

'There is Robert Dawson, send him,' cried Mrs. Giles, espying me as I issued forth from behind the wood-pile. She could not have made a more grateful suggestion to my ear.

'Robert,' said Mr. Giles, turning round, 'can you go to mill for me this morning?'

'Yes, Sir; as soon as I have finished my patch of potato-digging,' answered I, 'I should like to go.'

'You can take the horse and waggon, and I'll put in the corn——'

'A good grist of it, too, Mr. Giles, so it will last; and then I shall not be plagued again very soon.'

added Mrs. Giles, setting down her pail on the doorstep, and looking round.

‘How long before you will get done your job?’ said my employer.

‘In about three-quarters of an hour.’

‘I’ll have the horses harnessed, and be here ready for you; and I will put in six bushels of corn—three-bags full. The miller will take his toll, and you may have yours. You can have yours ground there, and bring home the meal for your folk or not, just as you have a mind.’ So said Mr. Giles, as he threw the meal bags into the bottom of the waggon.

‘How much corn will be due to me, do you think, Mr. Giles?’

‘A peck, I suppose. Will you have it ground with the rest, and then take it home, or will you take it out in corn before you start for the mill?’

‘I think I will take it all,’ I answered, for I had not had time to think just how I should dispose of my corn, in order to turn it into ready money.

‘That is right; bring home the meal to your mother;’ and with that I vanished through the hole in the garden fence, and returned to my digging.

And now fancy me on the way to mill. I was fairly in business, and not losing my studies, either; for I should have said that the master had been called home by a sudden death in his father’s family, and we *were enjoying a few days’ vacation.*



**'NO, TOM: I AM GOING TO EARN ME A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES, AND  
THE MONEY FROM MY CORN IS GOING TOWARDS IT.'**—See page 33.

‘Now, how shall I sell my corn?’ was the next question that occupied my mind. ‘Shall I ask Mr. French to buy it, or shall I sell it to the miller? The miller once before had taken my corn. Perhaps he will now;’ and to offer it to him was the final conclusion.

Arriving at the mill, a snug establishment in a hollow, where a deep and narrow stream ran over a sort of natural fall, three waggons were before me, and the mill was at work merrily. The old miller was no favourite with the customers of the mill, and I heartily wished I might not have to transact any business with him. ‘He was a hard man for a bargain;’ so said the people round; while the miller’s son was a general favourite. I stopped my horse, and, tying him, went in to find the men. Greatly relieved was I to behold the son, Tom by name, standing by the hopper. Now, although Tom must have numbered twenty-five years of his life, he was still known to all the country simply as Tom; and a better fellow could not have been found. ‘Tom,’ said I, ‘will you grind my corn—six bushels?’

‘Try to,’ answered Tom; ‘who is it for?’

‘It’s Mr. Giles’s corn, and, Tom, he’s going to pay me a peck for bringing it. Now I want to sell it; do you not want to buy it?’

‘Father thinks we have got a good deal on hand, now,’ answered Tom, stirring round the corn in the

hopper with his hand ; ' how much will you take for it ? '

' I do not know what corn is worth now. '

' How much are you going to sell ? ' asked a man who was walking in and out.

' A peck, ' answered I.

' No great sale, ' remarked the man.

' He only wants enough to get a pipe and tobacco. ' Tom meant to be droll.

' No, Tom ; I am going to earn me a new suit of clothes, and the money for my corn is going towards it. I hope I shall get enough before the cold weather sets in. '

' How much have you now ? ' asked Tom.

' Nothing yet ; I am in hopes I shall take my first earnings to-day ; so I offered to do this job for Mr. Giles, ' said I.

' Why, you are quite a little business fellow, ' exclaimed the man, appearing from behind a post. ' If you do not take the corn, Tom, I will. '

' O ! I 'll take it, ' said Tom ; ' I would take all Robert 's corn, whether I took anybody else 's or not. ' And his large mouth widened into a pleasant smile.

By-and-by the corn was duly measured out ; a part to the miller for grinding, a part to me for carrying, which was added to the miller 's heap, and the rest was poured into the hopper. Then I went away to look about the pleasant precincts of the mill. There was the water dashing over the craggy rocks ; here

the white foam, there the whirling eddy, and farther on the dark, glassy surface. I threw dry leaves into the stream and watched their motion till they were swallowed up in the miniature vortex. I leaped from rock to rock, and bathed my bare feet in the little pools warmed by the clear sunshine. Then I wound my way up a narrow path among the pines on the hill-side, and sat down on the smooth underbrush to eat my bread and cheese.

‘What I meant to be when I was a man,’—was a subject that frequently occupied my fancies. Now, I thought, how pleasant to be a miller, and live by the side of a little river ; but after all, father says it is not so much matter what one’s business is, if one does what one has to do, and does it right. Even if I should live to be a man, my ideas about such things may change very much. I am sure this world is not to be my home. I am to live for ever in another and very different world, and perhaps I am nearer to it than I suppose. God is my Creator. He has given me a mind and heart, and has placed me here to love and obey Him. I am to learn His will from the Bible. He there tells me what He would have me to do, and He there promises to give me all the grace and strength I need to do it. He tells me of a Saviour, Who died that I might live, and that for His sake He will freely give me all things. These were my sober thoughts, *and the quiet loneliness of the place naturally led to*

them. The conclusion of the whole matter was that I would try to do my duty, day by day ; and thinking that my corn must, by this time, be nearly or quite ground, I hastened back to the mill. That evening I reached home the happy possessor of tenpence.

‘What are you going to do with it, Robert?’ asked my father.

“Keep it for the present, Sir.”

‘Well, when you spend it, spend it usefully,’ said he; ‘remember that a little spent wisely is better than a thousand misused.’ I at once put my little fortune into a small tin trunk, which was carefully kept in the upper drawer of my mother’s bureau. The money already earned was but a small part of that which was necessary for my purpose ; and I began to look about for something else to do.

Some of the boys (myself among the number) were stretched out, at noon, during the interval of school, on the sunny side of the school-house. This noted building was situated at one end of a long plain, through which ran the village street. It was truly *the* street ; for the village had but one. On this, at long intervals from each other, stood the principal houses, among which the school-house and the meeting-house were, of course, regarded as the most prominent.

‘There goes Squire Hall’s winter wood,’ remarked Charley Frazier. ‘He has got a neat yoke of oxen there ; not another like them in our village—is there?’



A discussion of this question, about Squire Hall's oxen, followed. Some of the boys supported the claims of a pair that Major Brooks owned, but they made a feeble stand against the acknowledged merits of Squire Hall's.

"I wish I could help to pile that wood," thought I. 'Squire Hall has got one man less than he used to have. I wonder if he would not employ me? One can never know till one tries, father says; so I'll try.'

When school closed in the afternoon, I determined to go over to the squire's; and so I joined the boys whose homes were below his house. The great gate of his wood-yard was open, and several of us went in. Everything about the premises was in perfect order. We looked about, and in a short time my companions departed. The wood-pile attracted my attention, or rather, the wood to be piled. 'I must find work here,' was the uppermost thought in my mind. Mr. Merry, Squire Hall's chief workman, just then came along from the field.

'Mr. Merry,' said I, 'do you not think Squire Hall will let me help pile his wood?'

'You! How much could you pile, I wonder?' he asked, in a surly tone.

'Try me, and see.'

'I do not want any boys about me. They are more *plague than profit*,' growled Mr. Merry, as he turned

his back upon me. But I was resolved not to be discouraged.

‘I can just ask the squire himself,’ thought I. ‘There can be no harm in asking; and father says we must not let little obstacles frighten us.’ So, putting my hands in my coat pockets, I walked out of the yard.

As I passed the front of the house, I looked up at every window, wondering whether the squire was in, and whether, after all, it was best to ask him. ‘Perhaps it will be of no use, if I should. “*Try*,” father always says, when he would urge my courage on.’ I sat down upon the stone wall on the other side of his house, revolving the subject in my mind. The chills of an October sunset began to creep over me.

‘If I have a new, warm suit, I must *try* for it. Suppose I go in and ask Squire Hall, and then the matter is settled.’ And I slowly approached the front gate. ‘Perhaps Mr. Merry will not let me help him;’ and at that moment I espied the squire turning round a lane, and coming towards his house. ‘Here is a good chance. I will run and ask him now!’ What a magic there is in that little word *now*! ‘Nobody is near!’ So I hastened to meet him. As I drew near I pulled off my cap and made a respectful bow. He stopped.

‘Will you please to let me help pile your wood, Sir?’ said I, blushing to the very eyebrows.

‘What is your name? I see you often!’ And he looked searchingly at me.

‘Robert Dawson, Sir.’

‘Hem! ah, yes; Robert—Robert Dawson. I know you. Well, you want to pile my wood, do you?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘Can you pile wood as well as you can cipher, Robert?’ he asked. I remember you at the school. Does Mr. Merry want you? He’s the man to ask.’

‘No, Sir,’ answered I, with great simplicity; ‘he does not want me.’

‘You are after employment then, Robert; and you do not go to school now, I suppose.’ He spoke kindly.

‘Yes, Sir; I go to school. But I wanted to get something to do out of school hours,’ said I, poking the dirt about with my bare toes.

‘You cannot do much in these short days,’ he said.

‘I can TRY!’

‘Yes, TRY; that is right. And if Mr. Merry wanted you, I should like to employ you very well. But Mr. Merry manages these things pretty much in his own way.’ And he began to move on.

He must have seen my disappointment, for he added: ‘We will see, Robert! we will see! But Mr. Merry has got to be consulted in all these things.’ And he left me with a hurried step. I stood still a *few moments*, in busy thought. Then crossing the

street, I raced home over the dry leaves and short turf, on the other side of the road. At night I be-thought myself what new applications I could make. On the afternoon of the third day my mother sent me on an errand to the corner.

‘Halloo, there!’ some one shouted. ‘Halloo, boy!’ It came from Squire Hall’s yard. ‘Come over here.’

I looked up, and there was Mr. Merry beckoning to me.

‘You’re the boy that wants some work, are you?’ said he, as I scampered over to him.

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘Well, if you will pile as fast as I cut and split you may come. But you will have to work, I tell you. All this wood must be housed within a week. So you can come as soon as you like.’

Then I went upon my errand with great glee. ‘Work to do! work to do!’ was all I could say.

The early morning and the late evening found me striving to keep up with Mr. Merry’s saw and axe. The boys vainly tempted me to the playground, and I was at home only to perform my accustomed duties.

A grand nutting party, long talked of among the boys, was at length appointed to take place this week. The boys in our district were going to join district number four, and visit the great nutting region, about ten miles off. The plan was, to go in waggons and spend the day, carrying our dinners to eat among the

trees. We were to take a tea-kettle and other cooking utensils, and live in true camp style. Heavy frosts had already cracked the bark of the nuts, and a warm day in the early part of November promised to give us the finest weather for our excursion. How much had I thought of it! Boys in the country have so few excitements of the kind, that a nutting party possesses uncommon interest. I believe I dreamed about it for nearly a week together: and it was now come! The day had been actually appointed! And I, what was I to do—go, or not go? Charley Frazier and Sam Jones, and all the boys whom I saw, talked of my going as a thing of course. I was to go in Sam Jones's waggon. The evening before I made a few preparations. My bread and cheese and pies were laid aside, ready to be rolled up; and I borrowed a large basket of neighbour Giles, for my nuts.

'Then you will go, will you not?' said Jane; 'I would.'

'I shall not be sure till to-morrow morning,' said I, between fear and hope. 'I can tell better when I see Mr. Merry again.'

'Do go!' added Mary; 'do go, Robert!'

My parents offered no advice in the case.

I had piled up all the cut wood that evening. My work had been done clean. Meaning to reach the wood-pile the next morning before Mr. Merry, I could *ask him to let me go with great safety*, because it would

appear that there was nothing then to do, and I could promise to work the faster on the next day. No man was harder to deal with than Mr. Merry.

At early sunrise I was up and dressed, brimful of delightful anticipations from the day's excursion. It was a wonderful fine day in the Indian summer,—days that are like a smile on the stern and grave face of November. I did not for a moment doubt that within two hours we should be on our winding way to the nutting forest.

‘I will be sure and go over to see Mr. Merry first;’ and away were my steps bent towards the squire’s. ‘But he will not be there; I shall have to wait.’ As I approached the gate I heard the sound,—saw—saw—saw! ‘Who is up so early?’ I opened the gate and went in, and who should be there but Mr. Merry himself and another man, with wood enough sawed and split to employ me for two hours at least! ‘What shall I do?’ thought I. ‘What *shall* I do?’

‘Work enough! work enough!’ cried Mr. Merry. ‘It is time for lazy boys to be at their work. Come! take hold! or you will lose the bargain!’

There was a sly and wicked expression in his tone and manner, which he usually wore when he had outwitted or overreached any of the boys with whom he had anything to do. The truth is, Mr. Merry did not like boys.

With a heavy heart, indeed, did I begin my work.

'I have a great mind to run off, and have nothing more to do with such a man. He knew I wanted to go nutting.' Such were my first thoughts. 'I will give up the nutting rather than give up the job; for if I go now, Mr. Merry will never let me come back again.' These were my second thoughts.

By-and-by the gate opened, and in rushed Charley Frazier, Sam Jones, and two or three others into the yard.

'Where are you?' shouted Charley. 'I have been hunting everywhere after you! Your father said he guessed you were here. Come! make ready! We are off directly!'

'Come, Robert! we ought not to lose the time!' echoed Sam. 'A jolly day we shall have of it. Come! hurry! hurry!'

'What a noise!' snarled Mr. Merry.

'I cannot go!' said I, at last; 'for I have taken this job, and I must do it.'

'O! Mr. Merry will let you go off just one day; will you not, Mr. Merry?' said Charley. 'Just to have Robert go with us, nutting.'

'Go, if he likes! I can get somebody else, easy enough.' Saw—saw—saw—and so he sawed up and down as if he heard nothing.

'Come! go, Robert! Why, you *must*!' cried Charley, earnestly.

'Come out here!' said I, drawing them outside

the gate, just to get away from the presence of Mr. Merry.

A noisy discussion followed.

‘No, Charley; I am not going. I have taken the job, and I mean to go straight through it. Father says, “We must not back out for small things.”’ Such was my settled, yet painful conclusion.

‘It is too bad! Pile wood all day!’ cried one. ‘That great pile!’

‘Only stick by stick,’ said I courageously. ‘If we make up our minds to it, we can then do it.’ Well do I remember how hard it was to act out those principles.

A great deal was said, but my purpose was fixed. They went away, and I turned to re-enter the gate. I gave one peep at the departing boys before I shut the gate. ‘O, what good times they will have!’ I sighed, in spite of myself; and in spite of myself I felt that something would turn up, that I should go, after all. I did not believe it *could* be that I should not go; I, who had helped so much to plan all about it! When I went back to my work I was sure that Mr. Merry would say something about the affair. Not a word did he speak. It was only saw—saw—saw.

Time was passing; and if I were going, should I not be pushing my preparations? I expected some of the boys back; and perhaps, should they come again, Mr. Merry might tell me to go. If Squire Hall would only happen to be out in the yard, and the boys here,



too! then I was sure Squire Hall would bid me go, and let me complete the job when I could.

My ears were open to every sound. I worked with a quick, excited movement, as if I were on the eve of a rescue. My heart beat violently. The nutting fields never seemed so charming, the excursion never appeared so interesting, now that I was just about to lose it, now that my going depended upon what some would call mere good luck.

Alas! Mr. Merry never condescended to utter a syllable, Squire Hall did not make his appearance at the door, nor did the boys return!

By-and-by the sound of waggon-wheels, with merry shouts, broke upon the still, morning air. One, —two,—three,—four waggons went by! I counted them all! I heard the cracking of their whips and the voices of their drivers—five,—six! I mounted the wood-pile and beheld them. There they went! gallop trot! speed away! full of animation and joyful anticipation! and I—I was actually left behind!

Nothing happened to relieve me from my duties. Tears of bitter disappointment rushed to my eyes and blinded the sight of the distant waggons. I jumped down and made the best of my way into the great barn, which was near, to hide my uncontrollable emotion from the eye of my master. I remember how I ascended a ladder to the hay-mow, and, flinging *myself on the sweet hay*, actually cried.

'It is too bad ! too bad !' was my bitter exclamation. 'Mr. Merry might have said, "Go, Robert ! and do your work after you get home." He *ought* to have said so.' Then I wiped my eyes, and bitter thoughts began to pervade my mind. 'It's of no use now !' I said aloud and mournfully. 'It's of no use at all ! They're gone, and I told them to go without me ! But I did not expect it,—that's a fact. I thought surely something would turn up. But I remember father says we must not hang our good fortune on "turn-ups," as he says a great many people do ; for they will certainly fail us. Yes ; I know that. He says, "Have an object in view, and keep to it until you accomplish it ; WORK IT OUT." Yes ; and I *have* an object in view ; I want a new suit of clothes, and I have taken a job on purpose to get them ; now let me WORK IT OUT ! I wonder how far they have got. O, 'tis such a pleasant day to go in the woods—O ! O !'

Reflections of this nature came and went like lights and shadows across my spirit as I lay on the hay-mow.

'It's of no use,' I exclaimed again, springing upon my feet ; 'I must make up my mind, and do it.'

Again I wiped away every trace of feeling, and began to descend the ladder, struggling (and it was indeed a struggle) to feel calm and manly. 'Almost any boy's father can get him a jacket, but mine cannot. So there is some reason why I should work and they play ;' and I came out into the sunshine, and approached

the wood-pile. 'Come now, then, go at it,' said I; 'it is only stick by stick, and a new suit to pay for it.' So did I put my reluctant hands to their duty.

'Herein do I exercise (or exert) myself,' said the great Apostle Paul, 'to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man.' To obtain this peace of conscience we must, not only do our duty with a cheerful and steadfast heart, but we must repair to the Fountain which has been opened for the washing away of all sin and uncleanness. This is the atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be crossed, and disappointed, and mortified in a thousand ways in our passage through the world, but if our sins have been forgiven and our souls renewed, our rejoicing will be the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world.

Cheerful calmness gradually stole over me, and I soon began to work with an alacrity which surprised even myself; nor yet was it surprising, as I have since learned. I was in the way of duty. The bitterness of the struggle was in the *disappointment*. That must soon pass away before the light of an approving heart. Ah! it is a *violated conscience* which carries the sharp and bitter sting. All things else are but shadows, flitting across the sunshine of our path. They go, and leave us serene as the summer evening.

A long, long time did I pursue my work, without

any interruption, until I found I gained rapidly on Mr. Merry; and by ten o'clock I was quite out of business. How many wheelbarrows full I carried to the inner wood-house and piled up I know not, but I had a plenty of work for three hours. I had just brought back the barrow, and there was not enough to fill it. Mr. Merry stopped his saw and looked up.

'You may be off and rest ye,' said he, in a pleasanter tone than was usual for him. They were the first words he had spoken, and most promptly were they obeyed. In a few moments I was in my mother's kitchen.

'Is that you, Robert?' said my mother in surprise.

'Why, Robert!' exclaimed Jane and Mary at once; have you not gone? We saw your bread and cheese and pie in the closet, and we did not know what it all meant; but we missed your bag. Why, Robert, tell us how it is that you did not go!'

I stated the case. Jane and Mary had many comments to make. In turn they blamed Mr. Merry, the boys, and myself.

'Mr. Merry might have told you to go—the brute!' cried Jane.

'And the boys might have called again, I think, in their waggon; and then Mr. Merry could not have helped himself,' said Mary.

'At any rate I would have gone, work or no work!' added Jane.

‘Robert decided the matter himself, and acted accordingly. I do not see that any one is to be blamed,’ said my mother, taking off her spectacles and wiping the glasses with the corner of her apron.

Meanwhile I was eating a piece of pie with great relish, and in silence. This being done, I went back to work. Another man, with his saw, was in the yard, and the business went forward rapidly.

At dinner my sisters again discussed my day’s occupation.

‘Do you not think, father, Robert might have gone just as well as not?’ asked Jane.

‘I think, my dear, that Robert acted like a boy who has business that he means to do. He had an object in view, and he resolved to accomplish it.’

And I knew, by my father’s tone and manner, that he was satisfied with my conduct. But he did not know anything about my struggles on the hay-mow.

About the middle of a cold Saturday afternoon, a few days afterwards, the ten lots of Squire Hall’s wood were sawed, split, and neatly piled up in the wood-house, ready for winter use. An agreeable sight it was to look upon. After laying the last stick, I got down and stood surveying every part of it with deep interest. There was a degree of satisfaction in thinking how it had arisen by my own industry. I thought how long the work seemed to be when I laid *the first stick* ; but, even stick by stick, how fast the

work went on! and now it was completed. And that even with Mr. Merry's approval, too; for he came in, with his saw, just then.

'You have done your part *well*, boy,' said he; and they were remarkable words for Mr. Merry to use, for he seldom chose to be pleased with anything a boy did or could do. He filed his saw and busied himself about something while I lingered in sight, hoping to hear something of my pay.

'My pay! my pay! I wonder if he remembers it!'

At length, when his saw hung upon its accustomed peg, he said, 'Well, I suppose you expect some wages, Robert.'

'Yes, Sir.'

Then he went about some other work. I knew it would not do to hasten him, so I busied myself in picking up some nails that had fallen from an overturned box. Half an hour passed. Mr. Merry finished a second small job, and then sat down on a wood-block. He then very deliberately took out his wallet, and turned over carefully some bank-notes—my heart beat quickly. 'A bank-note! Surely he cannot mean to give me a bank-note!' thought I. It was more money than I was accustomed to see, much less to handle. I sat down upon a log, looking intently at him.

'Bob, I like you. You are not like other boys. You know what you are about; and that is more than

some men do. I will give you a shilling a lot—here ! take ten shillings, and be off !’

‘Thank you, Sir !’ said I, eagerly. ‘Thank you, Sir !’ And off I ran with my precious earnings.

‘Ten shillings ! ten shillings !’—so tumultuous were my feelings. ‘But I will,—I will know whether I have got my new suit or not, before I go a step farther ;’ and I skipped over the stone wall like a squirrel, and sat down by the other side, to calculate the amount of my means.

I remember it as if it were but yesterday.

‘A new suit ! a new suit ! Mother said it would cost nearly ten shillings, and that I have got. Yes ; and I have *earned it myself*, too !’ And then after turning something like a somerset over the stone wall, I went home with a new notion of myself. In the evening I meant to open the subject of a new suit.

At an early hour on Saturday evening all work was put aside. Our parents felt that holy time was at hand, and the evening was usually passed with our catechism or Bible, or in quiet and serious conversation.

‘Mother !’ I whispered, when she had washed up the tea-things and sat down near me, ‘mother, I must have a new suit of clothes by the Sunday after next : mine are so cold !’

‘I know they are cold,’ she answered, in rather a short tone.

'Will you buy me a suit, mother?' I asked, laughing at the corners of my mouth.

'I would if I could, Robert,' said she.

'But you *can*, mother!' said I.

She gravely shook her head: 'We want a great many things for winter, Robert.'

'Well, mother, will you buy me a suit if I give you the money?'

'You give mother the money!' cried Jane, who had drawn up towards us. 'I wonder where you could get so much? Robert grows very fast; does he not, mother?' said she, with a significant smile.

'He will soon be able to earn it, I hope,' said my mother, looking kindly upon me.

My hand had been in my pocket for some time, grasping the money, carefully wrapped up in a piece of paper; and now I drew it forth. Unfolding it slowly, I placed it on my mother's knee, saying triumphantly: 'There, mother; there is the money to get my clothes. I earned it with my own hands. Yes; there is the bill, and there is the shining silver!'

'O!' exclaimed Jane.

'O!' echoed Mary, peeping over Jane's shoulder.

My father looked up from the book he was reading

'Here is the money Robert has been earning for a new suit!' said my mother, handing it to him with evident delight.

Ah! that was a glad hour to me.



‘I am glad to see you *accomplishing* something, my son ; *working out* wise and useful purposes ; and then executing them *with your own hands*. And when you begin, resolve never to give up, if it is good and right to succeed. Put your hand to the plough, and look not back. If you make up your mind to do anything, *do it*. Oftentimes it is only through much suffering that we can achieve a noble work ; and the very conflict and trial give us new strength and new courage for the next duty.’

In short, emphatic sayings like these did my father imprint great truths upon us by the earnestness and force with which he uttered them. Their value and wisdom we gradually experienced as we obeyed them. Was I not then tasting some of the satisfaction of achievement ? And did not I feel an increasing strength for the new duties that might be before me ?

In due time the cloth was bought and made up. And with what hearty interest did I watch every stitch which my mother took before me ; and how many times did I go and examine the quality of the cloth with quite a business-like air.

That blue satinet jacket and trousers—how pleasant is their memory to me ! The finest broadcloths of my later days can never possess the charm which invested them. It was the first successful prosecution, by myself, of my father’s principles, so carefully taught—to *work out, unshrinkingly, my own good purposes*. Then

I laid the foundation of a habit to which I owe all my success—I PERSEVERED. Then I first began to feel the value of steady, manly, self-relying toil.

The jacket I kept in my trunk many years after I had ceased to wear it. And when I was far away from the spot where it figured in its original comeliness—faded, threadbare, mended, and darned as it was—this old jacket was a precious relic of my boyhood, and often seemed to inspire my flagging energies, and excite me to the successful prosecution of greater and better enterprises.





## Leaving Home.



FEW years more passed away, and I was reaching the most important period of my life—the choice of a calling. My father could do nothing for me. Of rich relations we could not boast. Upon myself, then, with the blessing of God, must I alone depend. After long deliberation, and several different unsuccessful applications, a situation in a printing-office in a town some fifty miles off was obtained. Printing was my choice, without, indeed, ever having seen the inside of a printing-office.

The time was drawing near, and it was my first departure from home. What mingled emotions of hope and fear and expectation filled my bosom ! Often have I kept awake during the night, wondering how it would all seem in my future residence ; planning how I should get there, and who would meet me, and what kind of a man my new master would be. The October frosts became more frequent. The leaves already began to cover the ground, and my preparations must be hastened, *for I had engaged to be there by the 5th of November.*

With what interest do I look back upon that last month at home, where, every evening, our little family assembled around the kitchen fire, happy in each other's love, and busy for the one who was soon to leave it! At one corner sat my father in his great arm-chair, his pipe on the oven-shelf beside him, and Cuff sleeping at his feet. Stoves had not then come into general use; but we beheld the dancing flame and the bright coals in the capacious fire-place. And there, too, were the crane and hooks, and the tea-kettle ever hanging on its own long hook, and the old iron tongs, too, with which my father diverted himself in laying and relaying the brands, when anything occurred to discompose his mind.

This autumn found my father increasingly feeble: his cough grew harder, and the hectic flickered brightly upon his cheek. His voice was low and hollow, and yet there was so much of cheerfulness in all his intercourse with us, that no one but the family realised how fast he was travelling towards the grave.

The 5th of November, as I said, was the appointed time of my departure. One day, as Jane was studying the almanac, she at once exclaimed: 'O, Robert! I have discovered something—a piece of good news for you—O!' And she gave several mysterious nods, quite peculiar to her.

'What is it?' we all asked.

'It is only for Robert;' and she took me by

the hand and led me into the bedroom, closing the door.

‘O, Robert! it is only three weeks from Thanksgiving that you go. Now you must not go until after Thanksgiving. Why, everybody stays till after Thanksgiving. I am in earnest. You——’

‘I must stay until after Thanksgiving, I am sure I must,’ I replied. ‘I know Mr. Simpson will not want me before; it would not be Thanksgiving away from home,—no, indeed, it would not! But father,’ I added, after a pause, ‘father,—what will he say to it, Jane?’

‘Why, in the evening, when we are all sitting together, you ask him, and we will all join in.’ Such was the plan of my sisters, for Mary was soon let into the secret revealed by the almanac.

‘I know we can bring it about,’ said the sanguine Jane; and no less sure was I.

That day, on going towards the corner, who should clap me on the shoulders and give me a boisterous welcome, but Charley Frazier. Charley and I lived no longer side by side. His father had removed into his new house, situated in a different part of the village. I was very glad to see Charley. Six months before that he had left town, to become a clerk in a shop at C——.

‘But, Charley, what are you at home for?’ I inquired.

‘O! I came home to spend Thanksgiving; but I do

not know that I shall go back again, the work is so hard there !’

‘I thought a clerk’s work was easy.’

‘No ; I do not call it easy to be on your feet from morning till night. Besides, Mr. Jones says, if I take so many vacations, he does not think I shall do for him ; just as if one could work all the time.’

‘But people must stick to their business, Charley,’ said I. ‘That is what my father always says.’

‘What ! all the time, and have no fun ? Mother says it is too bad to tie up boys so. I came off so long before Thanksgiving, I suppose he will have to get somebody to help him. For my part I am glad to get rid of work ; and I do not care a snap whether I go back again or not.’

I looked at Charley, in his new suit of blue broad-cloth, with a bright and animated smile upon his face, and with a freedom and joyousness of manner that could not fail to strike any one. I think a faint emotion of envy, at least of regret, sprang up within me at the contrast of our situations. Charley was rich, and could do as he pleased. I was poor, and must stoutly work for my living.

‘And you will not go until after Thanksgiving, will you, Robert ? Well, then, I am for having some capital fun—some first-rate times,—will we not ?’ And he threw his arm round my shoulder as he used to do when we were younger.

‘My time is fixed to go on the 5th of November; but since Thanksgiving day is so near, Jane and Mary say I ought to stay, and I think so, too.’

‘What does your father say?’

‘I have not said anything to him yet,’ I replied, with many misgivings as to the result of such an application.

‘O! well, you shall not go. Why, it will be too bad! Of course your father will let you stay. It cannot make much difference—indeed, it cannot make any difference that I see. Only two weeks! Ask your father this very evening,—I would.’ We parted, and I resolved to do as Charley advised.

Evening came, and we were sitting, as usual, around the kitchen fire-place.

‘Mother, only think—it is but two weeks before Thanksgiving that I am to go.’ So I opened the matter with some palpitation of heart, feeling that something very agreeable was at stake.

‘I thought of it when Mr. Simpson’s letter was read,’ answered my mother.

‘Thought of it and said nothing!—that is unfavourable,’ I said to myself. So it seemed, and I had not courage to go on.

‘Yes, mother; I am sure he ought not to go until after Thanksgiving. There is no need of it. Robert could not learn much in two weeks.’ So Jane took up *the matter*.

‘Boys are always at home Thanksgiving,’ added Mary. ‘Poor Robert! how lonely he would be, thinking of us all day, away from home!’

‘Charley Frazier has come home. I saw him to-day,’ said I.

My father continued to smoke his pipe, and my mother to ply her needle. Not a word from either.

‘Mother, don’t you think it would be pleasanter to have Robert here?’ asked Jane.

‘A great deal pleasanter,’ answered my mother, feelingly.

‘Then he ought to stay, I think. It is only a fortnight! It will pass away very soon,’ said Mary.

‘And perhaps we may never be all together again,’ added Jane.

As I looked at my father, I felt that there was little reason to expect a long continuance of the family circle unbroken. O, that I might stay!

At that moment we heard footsteps at the door and Charley entered. A hearty shaking of hands followed, for he was a great favourite at our house.

‘I want you to let Robert stay until after Thanksgiving, Sir,’ he said, turning his fine, fair face towards my father. ‘It is too bad he should go before! Besides, a fortnight cannot make much difference.’

‘Difference in what, Charles?’ asked my father, pleasantly surveying him.



‘Why, Sir, in what he can learn, or anything he could do for Mr. Simpson,’ he answered.

‘It would certainly make a great difference in his promptness and punctuality to his engagement,’ continued my father; ‘and as to his use—perhaps that will be likely to depend upon what kind of a boy Robert means to be. Mr. Simpson wrote expressly to have him come by the 5th, and it is to be presumed he knows his business wants better than we can know them.’ He paused, and there was a general silence, interrupted only by the snapping of the fire.

‘It would certainly be agreeable for Robert to stay with us,’ resumed my father—‘very agreeable; but it is an important question, how far we should let our feelings of pleasure interfere in matters of duty. We have had some difficulty in getting Robert a situation, and by this delay he *might* lose it. Jane says it is just as well for him to stay. I do not know how we can undertake to decide that point exactly. In my own experience I never saw that it was “just as well” to give up a duty for the sake of securing a pleasure; and I believe it is *never* “just as well.” If we do it once, we may do it twice; and who can tell how many times afterwards? Robert is now commencing business. He will find, in the business world, a great many difficult and disagreeable circumstances. Now the true way to get rid of them is not to turn about and *run away*, but to *face* them, to fight through them, to

meet them with a true, manly heart. What you have got to do, *do* ; and do it without shrinking or complaining. That is the only true way, Charley,—the only true way, Robert. Remember it, boys. It is so in the business world. It is just so in the Christian life. The Christian life is called a fight, a warfare, a race. Does the brave soldier shrink, and turn back, and flee when difficulties are to be encountered or dangers are to be met? Does *he* fight the good fight of faith who shuns trials, and seeks his own ease and pleasure, rather than to do and suffer the will of God with meekness and patience? And in the common business of life do we find that man successful and prosperous who cries out at the sight of obstacles and crosses: "It is too bad! It is really too bad!" No, boys; such is the language of drones and sluggards. We must wake up to the true business of life,—to serve God and our generation day by day, and humbly hope for a blessed rest through Jesus Christ, our Lord, beyond the grave. Robert must go at the appointed time, and go with a firm, self-relying heart.'

Charley looked into the fire, and listened. To him this was, indeed, a new lesson. The question was decided, and the pleasures of a 'Thanksgiving at home' must be given up.

The fifth of November came apace. The morning was grey and cold. I pulled the bed-clothes over my head, and should have enjoyed one more nap. But



I SAT DOWN IN THE CHIMNEY-CORNER TO MAKE THE HOLES AND  
PUT SOME LEATHERN STRINGS INTO MY NEW COW-HIDE SHOES.  
—See page 63.

no; I must up and do my work; and 'Up! up!' I cried to myself. But the flesh is very weak. I arose, dressed, and went into the wood-shed to get some kindling wood. There lay the old axe—so long and faithfully used. 'The last time,' did I exclaim, with pain, swinging it high in the air. Then the green sled, hanging upon its summer peg, caught my eye. I took it down and examined the iron on the runners—'All right,'—and then I dashed away the unbidden tear, crying inwardly, 'I must behave like a man.' I flew into the kitchen with my kindling wood. When the flames grew bright, my mother came down, and we had pleasant words together.

I sat down in the chimney-corner, to make the holes and put some leathern strings into my new cow-hide shoes. Every now and then did I follow my mother with a loving look, as she ground the coffee, or set the table, or baked the cakes for breakfast.

Breakfast was a sad season, though my father spoke cheerfully. The family altar was surrounded. My father's voice trembled and broke as he prayed for me. Tears flowed freely, and hearts were full of sympathy and strong emotion.

I was to depart on foot—a bundle in my hand, containing a change of clothes and a Bible, and half-a-crown in my pocket. A baggage waggon, belonging to a neighbouring town, was to take my trunk a week later. Some dough-nuts and cheese my kind

mother put up, and slipped into my pocket; 'To eat by the way, Bobby,' said she, smiling through her tears.

'Here, Robert,' said my father; 'here is a walking-stick to help you on,—a stout one, too.' I had noticed how carefully he had smoothed and fashioned it a few days before.

Jane looked out at the window sorrowfully. Cuff was whining in the cellar, where he was fastened, to prevent his accompanying me on my pilgrimage.

How long after I was ready did I make believe I was not ready! This little thing and that was still to be seen to, until I could find no excuse to do more. I stood up by the fire and buttoned up my coat. Ah! the last good-bye! I will not describe it. I ran from the door down the road, without looking back, echoing my father's words, 'A stout heart, Robert! a stout heart!' O! the long, weary miles of that first day from home! At the close of the second day I reached B——.

'Where is Mr. John Simpson's?' I asked of a boy about my own age.

He pointed me far down the street, to a small yellow house, with a book-shop and printing-office on the other side of it. The sight of my future home hastened me forward, in spite of the cold, the dust, and the weariness which penetrated every part of me. *Arriving* at the gate, I knocked at a side door, and

was soon ushered into a large kitchen, where sat two apprentices. I was glad it was dark, so that I could escape their staring scrutiny. But a tallow candle blazed in our faces from the mantel-piece, fully revealing me to my companions.

‘Are you the new hand?’ at length asked the eldest.

‘I have come to work in Mr. Simpson’s office.’

A loud bell then rang.

‘Supper! supper!’ shouted the two apprentices, starting up. My new master now entered.

‘Robert, is this you? I am glad to see that you are as good as your word. We are full of work, and want all the little help a new hand can give us.’ And I followed him into a long, narrow dining-room.

‘I see it was best for me to come. He is hurried,’ I said to myself. This, indeed, gave me satisfaction. But I felt little appetite, and stupidly did I answer the few questions they put to me. My heart was almost as heavy as my eyelids.

After supper Mr. Simpson and his men hastened back to the office. I escaped into the yard, in order to avoid the conversation of the family. Wearily did I sit down upon the side of a trough near the well, with nothing like a definite impression upon my mind, until my left hand was carelessly thrust into my pocket, and out came a small quarter of the last dough-npt.

‘O, home ! home ! home !’ I sighed piteously, as the old kitchen-fire, with its beloved circle, came up vividly before me, in the darkness of that evening. ‘There is Charley Frazier at his home. I wish I was Charley ; I do, indeed ! What an easy lot is his—and mine, how hard !’ So I soliloquised over the last crumb of my last dough-nut.

‘A stout heart, Robert !’ I seemed to hear my father say ; and all his wise and encouraging words came up to my remembrance with a re-awakening power. ‘Let me not put my hand to the plough and look back. I will make up my mind to do what is before me cheerfully.’ And I rose up from the side of the trough with a compressed lip and a courageous heart. I hope I offered a sincere prayer to the Giver of all good, that He would give me grace and strength to do His will.





## An Important Era.



HERE were trials, obstacles, and much embarrassment to contend with in the new scenes which opened upon me at Mr. Simpson's house and office. New influences, new companions, and new ideas came fast around me. I tried to go straight on my way, doing diligently and with all my might whatsoever my hands found to do. My father had always taught me not to be afraid of work, nor grumble, nor complain, nor compare myself with others more advantageously situated; but to look at my own duties, and do them cheerfully and faithfully. And I had, afterwards, abundant reason to rejoice that I followed his counsels.

The moral atmosphere of my new home was altogether unlike the one I had left. My parents were strictly religious. They always acted upon conscientious Christian principles in all their walk and conversation. Although it was not then a very common thing to address children upon the subject of personal piety, yet the light of their example was constantly



before us, and we children could not remain ignorant of our duty or our responsibility to God our Saviour.

Mr. Simpson was an honest and an industrious man, but the fear of God was not in his heart nor before his eyes. In pleasant weather he attended public worship with his family ; but a rainy Sabbath was a choice day to examine his accounts and study his ledger. Three apprentices lived with him, and we were all permitted to pass the Sabbath as we pleased, provided we interfered with none of the proprieties of the house. How different was all this from my own home, where the Sabbath was a day remembered and kept holy, and yet never irksome to me, for my parents always secured for us a pleasing variety in its duties !

James, Thomas, and myself (the three apprentices) occupied the same chamber ; and how did we pass the Sabbath ? James usually dressed and went out after breakfast, seeking companions of his own age, with whom he walked, talked, or rode. To him it was a day of recreation and amusement. Thomas preferred his bed. A large part of the day was given to sleep ; the remainder was passed in some church or in the kitchen, where he made merry with the dog, kittens, and children. And as for me, I found my way into the gallery of a church, where principles were inculcated akin to my father's ; and for several Sabbaths was a *constant attendant* there. The daily influences which

were around me began, at length, to operate unfavourably upon my conduct. In pleasant weather I read my Bible hastily, if at all, and preferred a walk on Sabbath afternoon to 'being pent up in church,' as my associates described the exercises of worship. My scruples about reading religious books, or none, upon the Lord's day, became weaker. I at last read even *The Forty Thieves* during the interval of worship without any serious compunction of conscience. I could laugh at low jokes, and even crack them myself. Although I was seldom alone, yet was I often lonely.

'Home!—home!—home!' was the burden of my secret sigh. 'What is Jane, or Mary, or father, or mother doing?' was my frequent inquiry, while busiest at my work; and I longed for the tranquil pursuits of my native village.

In the last letter I received from home Jane asked, 'Can you print yet, Robert?' Now I was desirous of showing her some specimen of my new employment, although, as yet, I had scarcely begun to learn its first principles.

'I will print Jane a letter,' was the happy thought; 'but when and how shall I do it?'

After breakfast, one Sabbath morning, I went into the office to look about and find some type that would not be wanted for some days at least.

'I will work until the bell rings, and then to

church.' Such was the decision; but so interested did I become in setting the type, that the bell made little impression upon my ear, and less on my mind. I did not heed it, and worked on in something like a very bungling manner, I am quite sure. But the little metallic letters arranged themselves, with my help, into syllables, words, and lines; and I pleased myself in thinking how pleased Jane would be.

'There is no more harm in doing this than in writing a letter. What is the difference? And I am sure everybody here writes letters on a Sunday!' In this way I answered the question that would continually force itself upon me: 'Are you doing *right*, Robert?'

'I have no time any other day, and it will please them at home so much, to see my own printing. And besides, I shall go to church when the bell rings.'

Unfortunately I begun this, my first work, from type that lay in disorder; and, of course, it sadly puzzled me to find the letters, and greatly prolonged my labour. On I worked, nor was I aroused until the house-bell called me to dinner. I started!

'What day is it?' I asked, almost bewildered.

'Sunday! It is Sunday!' and a great fear stole over me, as I looked at my work, and again said, 'It is Sunday!' I looked out at the window. It was a clear, warm, sunny day in February, when the snow on the tops of the houses, and came down from

the eaves like a shower of rain. 'How pleasant to go to meeting!'

In no very peaceful state of mind did I leave the office and go to dinner. I felt afraid—not certainly of my master, for I but copied his example; not of Tom nor James: but of *myself*—of the sense of wrongdoing which began to oppress my heart. 'I will go to meeting; yes, I will!' firmly did I resolve.

Mr. Simpson had been at church, and talked about the sermon. James and Thomas had been there too.

'Where have you been?' asked Thomas, who sat next to me at table.

'Been about here, all alone,' answered I, in a surly tone, to forbid further inquiry.

'Robert, you had better go to meeting,' said Mr. Simpson.

I hung down my head, and said nothing.

Some time before the second bell rang in the afternoon, I sallied forth towards the church. It was, as I said, a beautiful winter's day, but not beautiful to me, for my heart was ill at ease.

The sound of sleigh-bells was behind me, swiftly coming up the street.

'Halloo!' shouted a voice.

'Come, Bob! come, now; get in.' It was Tom; and the sleigh was beside my very footsteps.

'Where are you going?' said I.

'O! only a little way; come, jump in with us.'

His companion was a lad for whom little respect was felt by the more sober part of his acquaintances.

‘No, no; I cannot go!’ I said; ‘I must show myself inside some church to-day,—it is so pleasant.’

‘So pleasant for riding, Bob! Come, we have no time for it in the week-days. Come, we shall not be gone long.’

They urged, and I willingly heard them. Suddenly, even to myself, I jumped in beside them. Crack went the whip, and away we sped like lightning. The bells, the bracing air, the winter beauties of the scene, dazzled and excited me; and to drown reflection, I strove to become the merriest of the three. Tom drove; and he drove, scarcely knowing whither. On,—on,—on we went until the spires of a town, ten miles distant, were in sight.

‘We must have supper here,’ exclaimed Tom.

‘O, no! do let us go back!’ said I; ‘we shall be so late,—ten miles to return!’ and I wished myself anywhere but there. The sun was declining, and the chills of evening came rapidly on.

‘A supper!’ with a profane oath, exclaimed our companion. Tom drew up to a tavern door.

‘I say, let us go back. Mr. Simpson will expect us back to supper.’ And, alas! there was no money in my pocket to buy one elsewhere.

My companions rushed into the house, and planted themselves at the bar. ‘Gin!’ cried Tom.

‘No; brandy-and-water! I take brandy!’ vociferated the other.

Several men were in the bar-room. I looked around, and they were tavern loungers, with bloated cheeks, red noses, and thread-worn garments. The fumes of strong drink filled the room, and the fire-place was covered with tobacco. Oaths mingled with every sentence that caught my ear. Tom and Curtis were drinking and rejoicing over their cups.

‘Is this the evening of Sabbath-day!’ I asked myself, with deep emotion.

‘Come, Bob; come, my good fellow; take a drink!’ cried Curtis, beckoning to me to come towards the bar; it will warm you up!’

What they both urged I can now scarcely remember. I only know that I refused to drink. They sat down by the fire, smoked cigars, and drank again. Their swaggering, boisterous manner disgusted me, and for the first time I was heartily ashamed of my companions.

‘Where do you go to meeting?’ sneeringly asked an old man of Curtis Hare.

‘O! I do my own preaching,’ answered Curtis. ‘I am satisfied; that is enough.’

A general laugh followed. Then the fiery cup began to show its effects on Curtis’s brain. Astonished and mortified to hear the profaneness of his language, I arose and went out into the piazza. The sun was just setting. The sky had a wan and mellow appear-

ance. A deep and solemn stillness was in the air. I took two or three turns in the piazza, without knowing what to do. If we stay longer, they might not be able to get home; certainly not soberly, even if we went now; and how could I ride with such brutish companions, on a still Sabbath twilight? I felt as if we should be known and marked, in spite of all I could do. Presently out they came, declaring their intention to return home.

‘I think it is high time,’ said I, gravely.

‘Time, eh! time! time! high, higher, highest!—high time, eh! eh! Master Bob, eh!’ Such were the senseless gibberings of the maddened youths. Tom was disgusting; my soul loathed him. We hastened into the sleigh. Tom struck his foot and tumbled in, muttering oaths as he fell. In attempting to take the reins he pulled this way and that, until the fierce and spirited horse grew restive under the unsteady guidance.

‘Give me the reins, Tom!’ said I.

‘No, my boy; but you will not have the reins—not you.’ Again another lurch of the sleigh. Our limbs, if not our lives, were at stake. Seizing the reins with a strong hand, I pushed Tom aside; and putting the horse’s head in the direction we were to go, we went on at a brisk rate. Curtis sank down on the buffalo skin, and was soon insensible, even to the repeated kicks given by Tom, whenever he encroached

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upon his feet. My companions were drunk! yes; absolutely drunk!

‘Sabbath evening! Thank Heaven, my parents do not know of this!’ was almost the only definite thought I had, apart from the care and anxiety of getting safely home.

Towards the middle of the evening, the lights of home became visible, and how relieved was I to behold them! The cold air and the long ride had sobered Tom. He aroused Curtis, who, by the time we reached his father’s stable, was able to sit up, and even to connect his sentences with some degree of sense. As we at last drove into the stable-yard, his father came angrily forth to learn where he had been and what was the matter. I threw down the reins, and, jumping from the sleigh, hastened from the group. Angry words, with many oaths, between father and son, echoed on the still air, until I ran from their sound, down through an opposite street. Cold, hungry, and disquieted, I hardly knew whither I was going.

‘O, that I was at home! O, that I had never left home!’ I was ashamed to pass by the lights that streamed from the windows, so self-condemned did I feel. ‘Sunday! And this has been *my* Sunday!’ I shuddered to think how the day had been spent. Making a turn in the street, I came to the church where I had attended public worship. It was lighted, and there was a service. It was a relief even to go in,



and I hastened up the steps. I took a seat far back in the gallery. 'Young man, pause! thy steps are tending down, down, down in the broad way that leads to death! Arise and return!' These words of the preacher broke with fearful distinctness upon my ear.

'What! is he speaking to *me*?' My heart beat quickly. I leaned my head against the railing to conceal my face. It seemed as if I was marked, and that all eyes must be turned towards me. No; he neither knew nor cared for me. Why should I think he means me? Then he spoke of broken Sabbaths, of bad companions, the wine-cup, the gaming-table; how gradually, yet surely, after Sabbath desecration, steals on every evil habit. 'It is for me! It is for me! Can he know what I have been doing?' and I involuntarily looked up to see who it was that was portraying my case with such boldness. He was a stranger. It was hard to hear it, but I heard the sermon through,—yes, every word of it.

On leaving the church, I knew not where to go. I did not care to meet Mr. Simpson's family, nor did I wish to retire to my chamber if Tom were there. So I walked up and down the streets half an hour, until a feeling of dizziness came over me. Sitting down upon a doorstep, I felt myself an outcast. The chilly dampness which usually succeeds a thawing winter's day penetrated my body, while a keen sense of *wrong-doing* filled my soul, and seemed to bewilder my vision

‘And what has led to all this?’ I asked myself. ‘What has led to all this? I have brought it all on myself. I see it, and what is it coming to?’ Some one approached, and I arose and bent my steps towards Mr. Simpson’s. No one was in the kitchen when I reached the house, and Mrs. Simpson passed me in the entry. ‘So you have got home, Robert!’ she remarked.

I took a lamp and went to our chamber. It was the most unhappy evening I ever passed; nor was it any alleviation to feel that neither my master nor my parents would ever know the history of that day. O, no! mine was the unhappiness of a guilty conscience; and on such gloom day can shed no radiance, neither can the darkness deepen it. The ignorance of friends cannot alleviate it, neither can their kindness remove it. It is a matter between God and the soul.

Tom was in bed and fast asleep. I, too, retired to bed, but not to rest. ‘Young man, pause!’ rang in my ear, and roused me from even an unquiet slumber. The reflection which most amazed and alarmed me was this: ‘When I worked at the printing in the morning, how badly I felt! But then I was determined to go to church. I was sincere in my determination; but how quickly I was led away,—persuaded to go to ride! In a minute, almost, I was in the sleigh—before I thought. Perhaps I should do just so again. How could I have done it when I knew better, and not ten

minutes before *resolved* better? No; I do not know what there is to stop me from doing just so again, and then I shall be going down, down! as the preacher said. Father is not here; nobody is here to keep me back: what shall I do?' and I tossed wearily on my pillow.

O that boys would believe that this is but the natural course of things. If we deliberately do wrong once, every following step in that deceitful path is easier than the preceding; for sin blinds the soul to danger. Then seeking to stop the voice of conscience by some good outward act merely, such as going to church, or reading the Bible, or studying some religious book, in reality amounts to nothing. It may indeed make us *feel easy*, but it imparts to us no moral strength to resist the next temptation. Something *deeper* is needed. We must look at the number and guilt of our transgressions, and exercise a true repentance on account of them. We must pray for pardoning mercy, and for that grace which is needful to help in every time of need. Such grace our Divine Saviour (Who knows us far better than we know ourselves) can alone impart.

The clock struck two. I awoke from disturbing dreams. I arose, and sat beside the bed. A heavy stillness reigned, interrupted only by the heavy breathing of my companions.

'Why cannot I sleep as well as Tom?' I asked.  
*Ah! my parents* had trained me to a sense of duty,

and I could not forsake the path of right without a terrible struggle. 'O, my Saviour, help me!' I inwardly exclaimed; and again flung myself on the bed.

The light of the next morning brought no relief to my burdened heart. 'How do I know what I may be tempted this day to do?' was the fearful question that forced itself again and again upon me, while I was dressing. Even in crossing the yard to the office I feared what I might be left to do. 'I am afraid I have not strength to resist any temptation. What shall I do?'

I began my work, but everything went wrong. I built the office fire with difficulty, and when it was kindled I gazed vaguely into it; and seemed to see, 'Pause, young man!' written even upon the wreathing flames. So passed the day. This feeling assumed a more and more distinct shape. 'I am not safe. What may I not be led to do? Would that I had my father's anchor!' For I had often heard him say, in times of temptation, 'Faith in God has been my only anchor.'

It was Tuesday evening, and I walked out alone, still vexed, restless, anxious, undecided. 'I wish I was truly and really a Christian,' I said, half aloud. 'Make up your mind, then, and pursue this end till it is attained,' my father seemed to say to me, as he had said to me a thousand times on other subjects. 'I will do it, God helping me; I will strive to enter into

His kingdom; I will seek to glorify Him in my body and spirit, which are His. Yes; and I will begin now!' MY PURPOSE WAS FORMED,—I trust, in humble reliance upon Divine aid.

Retracing my steps, I entered the gate, and found my way in the dark up the stairs of the printing-office. The key was hanging upon a nail in the wall. I felt about some moments before I could find it. I then unlocked the office door, went in, and locked it upon the inside, behind me. 'Here I am alone,' said I. The new moon threw a feeble ray into the window, giving me sufficient light to prevent me from stumbling over anything.

I was now firmly resolved to lead a life of devotion to my Saviour's service, yet how ignorant was I of its real nature! Falling upon my knees (it was the first honest, earnest prayer I ever uttered), I cried: 'Lord Jesus, help me! I am lost! Saviour of sinners, I am very guilty—pardon me!'

How long I stayed there I know not; and when I went away I hardly knew what to do. Thus passed several days. I wanted instruction; I wanted to hear the words of a good man. In short, I felt what a Christian parent was worth. What portion of Scripture was best fitted for me, I knew not. 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' 'I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' 'They that are whole need not

a physician, but they that are sick.' 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus, Christ came into the world to save sinners.' These delightful and precious truths, though in my memory, did not come now to my relief. I was in darkness, and knew not at what I stumbled. I knew not what to pray for as I ought.

At last came the thought, 'This will not do. I will go to my minister, and ask him what I shall do. I cannot give up for difficulties. I do not know what to do. I must get somebody to tell me. Yes; I will. I must make up my mind and do it, and do it *courageously*. *It must be done*, and done now!' I was cleaning type-cases, and I well remember how vehemently I plied the bellows, while bracing myself up to the resolution.

Evening came. The business of the day was over, and I went out in the direction of Mr. Anson's house. Many times was I well-nigh persuaded to go back. Coming to a place where the street parted into two, I took two steps in the way opposite from Mr. Anson's 'This will not do,' I said within myself. '*What you have got to do, do it* : and with a resolute heart.' And so faithfully had I been taught the importance of this rule, that I stopped suddenly, almost as if a supernatural obstacle had sprung up in my way. I turned back and ran,—yes, I absolutely *ran*—towards Mr. Anson's.

‘Which house does Mr. Anson live in?’ I asked of a child I met.

‘That small one opposite,’ said the little girl, pointing to the other side.

With a palpitating heart I hastened across and found my hand upon the knocker. I was faint-hearted, and could scarcely lift it.

‘What you have got to do, *do it*,’ sounded in my ear again. Then I knocked. A child’s step came patting along in the entry. I trembled, and could hardly ask, ‘Is Mr. Anson within?’

‘Yes; he is my father,’ said the child, holding the light forward as if to see me more clearly. ‘Come in the study, Sir;’ and she led me into a little room on the left hand. As she opened the door, she put the candle down on a small round table in the centre; and, with a pleasant smile, bade me sit a moment, while she called her father.

I shrank into the farthest corner of the room, and hung my head. The slow steps of the good man drew near. I felt as if I should not dare to speak to him about my feelings.

‘Do it! do it!’\* cried a voice within me.

He entered the study. I had only seen him in the pulpit, and a great awe came over me as I beheld him. I almost wished the floor might open and swallow me up.

◊ ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’  
—*Ecclesiastes ix. 10.*



MR. ANSON DESIRED ME TO KNEEL BY HIS SIDE WHILE HE COM-  
MENDED MY CASE TO GOD.— See page 85.



‘I am glad to see you, my lad,’ said the clergyman, taking my hand.

Great tenderness was in his manner. It touched my poor, unhappy, struggling spirit, and I burst into tears. Then he spoke many things, and O, how wisely for one who was a stranger! I felt that I had found a friend. After many broken sentences, and stammering attempts, and much encouragement from him, I unbosomed my sorrow. How gentle, and yet how faithful he was! How he expressed for me what I could not myself express! How searching and appropriate were his admonitions!

It was my first interview with a clergyman, except that, when a child, I had been called in with Jane and Mary, to see our village pastor on his parochial visit, once a year; and that interview inspired me with a love and veneration for the ministers of Christ, which the pulpit could never have done in a like degree. O, how blessed is the office! Standing in the place of his Divine Master, the weary and heavy-laden, the sinful, and sorrowing, come to him for aid, instruction, and sympathy; and how do they hang upon his words, and hold fast his instructions! How they heed it by the way, and remember it in their closet! O men of God! what momentous responsibilities rest upon you!

Though time has dimmed, it can never efface the memory of all that passed in that two hours’ visit. I cannot narrate the words, but I am a living witness of

their influence. He *instructed* me. What the young inquirer after a religious life needs,—yes, and the old as well as the young,—is faithful instruction ; not only the general instruction of the pulpit, but more especially that which comes when the inquirer and his teacher meet face to face ; and when one may ask, and the other answer, familiar questions. Let there be openness and sincerity on the one hand, and fidelity and the fear of God on the other, and good will be done. O, my youthful friend, whoever you may be that reads these pages, if you are away from home, in doubt, and perplexity, and uneasiness of soul, banish not your fears. If you read your Bible and kneel in prayer, and yet find your soul dark, with no peace, go to some man of God and tell him your griefs. Let nothing deter you. Let not false shame, or a consciousness of your insignificance, prevent. You have *a soul to save*,—a soul of infinite value. It is a great work—the great work of life. Set about it. Make up your mind to lose all else, if you can but save that.

After we arose from prayer (for Mr. Anson desired me to kneel by his side while he commended my case to God), I bade him good night, promising to visit him again. He lighted me out, and as I stood upon the door step, he again grasped my hand, and said impressively, ‘Remember, my son, **STRIVE** to enter in. Ah, yes ! I knew something about *striving* for the physical

life, and the same resolute business habits I found just *as necessary* in the spiritual life.

What had not a little resolution, under the favour of God, wrought out for me? My father's training and example were now developed in their true results. I had found a friend, and one that could instruct and guide me.

When I reached home and entered my chamber, Tom called out, 'Where have you been, you night-stroller? In no good company at this time, I know. I have been in bed this hour.'

'It is only half-past nine!'

'No getting off. Where have you been, Bob?' he vociferated boisterously.

'I have been at Mr. Anson's,' I answered, courageously, well knowing how he would receive my reply. His banterings continued until he fell asleep.

Many jibes and sneers did I for a time suffer from my companions for my Sabbath-keeping and church-going habits; but at length they yielded. I went straight forward on my way, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

I wrote to my parents some account of my new prospects. And by the next mail came a return from my mother, expressing their thankfulness and joy at the good news which my letter contained. And then how precious was all the advice it gave me! It seemed as if I had never loved my dear home more than I did.

then, or more ardently longed to behold the faces of friends. With what grateful joy did I rest upon my pillow that night !

In two days more another letter came. It was in an unknown hand, sealed with black. I hastily opened it. My father was dead ! It was sad, but not unexpected news. ‘Your father died happy, happy ! committing his soul, in confidence, into the hands of his Redeemer ; and happy in the hope that his son had found the same Refuge. His last words were, as if speaking to you : “ You have got all now, Robert : compass, chart, anchor, rudder, all !—you are heading right—keep on your course, my dear boy ! Thank God ! thank God ! ” ’

What a satisfaction has it ever been to me since, that my good father’s last hour was brightened with such holy joy.





## The Publisher.



It was in the third year of my residence with Mr. Simpson, that he had engaged to do a large amount of work for a publishing house in the city. Sufficient time had been given to accomplish it without any extra effort. But one evening, towards the close of the job, the publisher suddenly appeared in the office. He and Mr. Simpson were alone together some time. When the office was closed for the evening, Mr. Simpson told us that the work must be finished in three days, at furthest; and that we must all bestir ourselves early enough in the morning. It was my duty to open the office and prepare it for work.

'Tom,' said Mr. Simpson, 'I want you to get up and do Robert's work to-morrow morning. He looks very ill to-night, and must not come into the office until after breakfast.' I had taken a severe cold.

The stranger saw and marked us both, and heard Mr. Simpson's directions.

'Robert, do you lie a-bed to-morrow morning; and,

Tom, by all means be up by four. Here! take my alarm-watch and hang it up by your bedside. Be up, Sir, in good season.'

• 'Yes, Sir,' answered Tom, though in no willing tone.

When we went to bed a tremendous snowstorm was beginning to rage and howl without. The cold was extreme, and the wind a furious north-easter. I soon forgot the storm, and sank into a peaceful slumber, with the agreeable expectation of lying as long as I chose in the morning. In an incredibly short time (as it seemed, so profound were our slumbers) Tom and I were aroused by the alarm-watch,—one—two—three—four! Could it indeed be morning?

'It is time to get up, Tom,' shouted I, shaking his arm.

'Get up, then!' he growled, roughly.

'But I am ill, Tom, and you remember what Mr. Simpson said.'

No. Tom was not to be roused. *He* was not going to get up such a stormy morning, so early,—not he! *He* was not going to do it for Mr. Simpson, nor for me, nor for anybody else,—not he! *He* was not going to get up, if he *never* did any more work!

How many are like Tom, when a demand is made upon them for a little extra effort! No; *they* are not going to work so,—not they!

Now it was evident somebody must get up; and it

must be, certainly, one of us. I felt I had a *right* to sleep the night out, that time. Besides, I feared it might be hazardous to get up, for I was in a profuse perspiration, and the storm was raging violently. But my own personal considerations had no more effect upon my bedfellow than had his master's commands.

'Well, it must be done. *Make up your mind* to do it, and then do it courageously,' thought I. Out of bed I jumped, and dressed myself rapidly, without suffering myself to regret the snug, warm quarters I had left. In spite of headache, sore throat, and cough, I went bravely on. I ploughed my way to the office through the drifting snow, built the fire, and got everything in readiness for the workmen, long before they began to appear. Then tying the lantern before me to see the way, I fought with the snow until I shovelled a respectable path from the house to the office. Some one beside myself was up in the house. Several times he appeared at the window, looking out and watching my progress. While I was alone in the office, a heavy step ascended the stairs. Not Jones's, nor Tom's, nor Mr. Farley's, nor Mr. Simpson's. Lo! the publisher himself entered! 'He! such a rich man! up and seeing about his business so early!' I was amazed. Our office had done much work for him, and we all respected him greatly.

'I thought you were the boy who was *not* to get up this morning, Robert. A stormy morning this, and

tough work you have had of it,' he said, eyeing me keenly.

'My father always told me, Sir, when we had work to do, *to go forward and do it*, minding nothing about the weather, or anything else.' 'Only a few drops at a time,' I added to myself.

'Right! right!' exclaimed the publisher, with great spirit. 'You have had a training that is worth something,—yes; worth more to begin life with than hundreds of pounds. I see you can put your hand to the plough, and not look back. The great fault of young men, now-a-days, is, they are *afraid* of work. They want to live too easy; while the fact is, we cannot get anything that is worth having,—reputation, property, or any good,—without working, aye, striving for it. I must keep my eye on you, young man.'

Upon what apparently little incidents hangs the well-being of men! I say *apparently* little, chance-like incidents; and yet they are neither little nor by chance,—they are a part of the great moral woof into which our habits weave our destinies. They are, themselves, the result of long trains of influence, and the starting-points of others. So that what so many call a lucky hit, or an unlucky turn, is in fact the result of what the past hath wrought out.

To some it might have seemed a lucky hit, that the great publisher of — and I, an obscure apprentice, should have happened to meet just as we did, at half-



past four on a stormy winter's morning, in Mr. Simpson's printing-office; because from that time he became my fast friend.

At twenty-one I was free, with a good trade, thoroughly learned. At twenty-two I was master of fifty-eight pounds. At twenty-three a profitable paper and printing establishment, in a large neighbouring town, was for sale.

'How much money did you earn last year, Robert?' asked the publisher, who contrived to meet me at this time.

'Fifty-eight pounds, Sir, clear.'

'Just what I expected. I have bought the — *Journal*, office and furniture, and am going to set you up in business. I see you can take care of your own, therefore I can safely trust you with mine. You are not afraid of difficulties.'

No: it was not a lucky hit; nor any hit at all, if by this is meant a chance event. The meeting was the natural consequence of the business habits of the business man and the business boy! And now, when poor Charley Frazier, on beholding my comfortable home and pleasant lands, the other day, called me 'a lucky dog,' and 'one of fortune's favourites,' I would say to all as I said to him, 'Success in life—success in *any* department of life—can only come from, and is the legitimate result of, a firm, unflinching resolution to work,—to work honestly and industriously; and

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these habits must be formed in boyhood, or they will never be well formed. They must be *inwrought at home.*'

'Nothing good ever turns up for me !' exclaimed poor Charley,—as he came the other day to talk with me for the hundredth time about some new prospect for business. Alas ! they seemed always to be prospects, and very distant ones, too ! 'If I ever want to borrow a sovereign of my richest neighbour, he never happens to have one just then,—and now I do not care.'

I looked at his shabby coat, and thought of his wife and children,—poor !—poor !—very poor ! and asked, Why is it ? Had not Charley ability ? Why, yes ; but when Charley was a boy, his parents *always did his work for him.* I had to do mine for myself. Do not his present inefficiency, and fear of work, and frequent complaints, grow out of the too much aid, the useless sympathy, the constant gratification of his wishes rendered to him by his parents in boyhood ? Children must engage in active service, in labours, dangers, fatigues, if they would have healthy constitutions, a self-relying spirit, and the ability to take care of themselves.

Then, boys, be not afraid of work ! Do not be afraid of obstacles in the pursuit of a good end. A life lies before you. Its length you know not. It offers materials for you to carve out your own destiny, of course under the providence and with the blessing of

God our Creator. Carefully select your craft or calling. Work at it skilfully, industriously, faithfully. Then be sure it will yield you all you need.

But do you know that in your outward life another life is hidden? That in this life of bodily wants and activity, you are working out a life for an endless hereafter? The promptness, energy, resoluteness, patience, and fidelity which are so indispensable in your worldly business are much more indispensable in the more important business of the soul. We are commanded to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

By-and-by you will lay down your body, and have no more need of intercourse with the world or of interests in its pursuits. Then, whither shall the naked soul betake itself? What shall it be? Where shall it dwell? Will it appear corrupted and disfigured by unforgiven sin? Or will it have been made white in the blood of the Lamb, and so be fitted (by Divine grace) to dwell in purity and love with angels and the spirits of the just made perfect?

Remember that every day you are forming habits for your undying soul! Every day you are fashioning its character for eternity! Early learn a cheerful obedience. Early learn to deny yourself. Early learn to '*press forward*' in the footsteps of your Divine Master. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding

in the work of the Lord. Then shall ye receive the crown of glory prepared for all the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. To make achievements like these, remember a brave as well as a humble spirit is indispensable. A brave spirit! a spirit that will yield to no obstacle in the pursuit of a worthy end; a brave, unconquerable spirit, boys! It will, by God's help, accomplish wonders!





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